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Allen Dulles A Conservative Who Supported Many Liberals

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WASHINGTON—The unique contribution which Allen Dulles made to his country was not merely the building of the Central Intelligence Agency.

It was, instead, the early perception of this deeply conservative man that the Stalinist thrust at Western Europe in the early '50s was directed at precisely those liberal—indeed Socialist—organizations and institutions which American conservatives so deeply despised.

Armed with this insight, Dulles made the CIA into a weapon of support for the European left. The failure of Josef Stalin's last great postwar political offensive is the measure of his success.

It is unpopular these days, particularly in New Left circles, to refer to that offensive. On American campuses, the cold war has become a kind of Orwellian "unthink." Some professors actually tell students that Stalin's threat to make of France and Italy in the early 50's what Czechoslovakia is today was a figment of the "Establishment" imagination.

THE CIA CANNOT possibly have done anything for freedom, the New Left holds, because it is a prop for rotten right-wing governments. There is a grain of truth in this—but only a grain. What the New Left hates to face and dismisses as irrelevant is that it was not the Establishment which the CIA supported in Western Europe, but its radical opponents.

It was the largely Socialist International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the French Force Ouvriere, the West German Socialists under Ernest Reuter and Kurt Schumacher, leftist intellectuals such as Bertrand Russell—they and their institutions were made strong enough to resist the Communist wave.

There was audacity in the approach of this quiet Brahmin, who shared few of the social or political ideas of the men and institutions whose lives he saved and strengthened. It was audacious because in order to do so it was necessary to neutralize or fend off the hostility of the

entire American conservative establishment then in power.

Dulles knew what his fellow conservatives did not know: that European right-wingers were far more likely to make deals with the Communists than were men who really did believe in freedom and social justice.

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FOR THE BRILLIANCE of this concept, Dulles' countrymen, including the members of the New Left, ought to be grateful. They ought also to be grateful that while conducting the cold war he tried to prevent its excesses.

When it began, the cold war was unpopular. Americans wanted desperately to think of Russia as their ally, and of policy toward Russia as "hands across the sea."

But long before it ended, the cold war had become too popular.

At home it became the vehicle of demagogues such as Sen. Joseph McCarthy. Abroad, it provided a springboard for zealots who really wanted a hot war.

Dulles resisted both. There was an afternoon when he picked up the white telephone on his desk and told President Eisenhower that he needed the President's backing in a defiance of Senator McCarthy. If the President couldn't give it to him, he said, he would resign.

There was a morning when he met with C. D. Jackson, leader of the Luce empire who had become General Eisenhower's chief "psychological strategist." Jackson urged the arming of the East German rebels who had risen in Berlin. Dulles turned him down.

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THERE WAS SOMETHING a little old-fashioned about Dulles. He smoked a pipe, said "Bully" when he liked something and had an innate belief that freedom meant more than high profits, low taxes and the open shop. He was a conservative, to be sure.

But if anyone on the New Left reads history nowadays, he would find more of Thomas Jefferson in him than of John Adams, more of T.R. than of McKinley and, for that matter, more of Harry Truman than of John Foster Dulles.